



**STATE SENATOR
JUAN "CHUY" HINOJOSA
DISTRICT 20**

Austin Capitol Office
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, Texas 78711
(512) 463-0120
(866) 259-5016

Edinburg District Office
1508 S. Lone Star Way, Suite 6A
Edinburg, TX 78539
(956) 318-0725

Corpus Christi District Office
602 N. Staples St., Suite 200
Corpus Christi, Texas 78401
(361) 882-0900



**SENATOR HINOJOSA FILES LEGISLATION TO
STRENGTHEN THE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF AGUA SUD**

For Immediate Release

April 22, 2019

Contact: Dariel Ramirez
(512) 463-0120 office

AUSTIN, TX -- Today, after much discussion and cooperation from Agua SUD leadership, Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa filed Senate Bill 2552, a local bill to strengthen the transparency and accountability of Agua SUD board members and personnel. SB 2552 would require that Agua SUD board of directors file financial statements and apply conflict of interest and nepotism laws to the directors. It also covers eligibility requirements for service as a director or general manager, including the disqualification of any person or his or her relative who owns or controls more than a 10% interest in the fair market value of a business that receives money from Agua SUD (the District).

SB 2552 also details prohibited conduct for directors and employees of the District. Among its specifications, it provides that a director or employee may not have a personal interest in an agreement executed by the District. The bill also provides the grounds for removal of a director from the board if a director does not complete training and education requirements, does not meet eligibility requirements for service, or participates in prohibited conduct under this bill.

Openness and transparency are essential to maintain the confidence of citizens in their government, as well as to ensure the ethical use of taxpayer funds. In an effort to be transparent and accountable to rate payers, SB 2552 would require the District to prominently post on its website reports showing payments made by Agua SUD on a monthly basis. Additionally, the District would be required to post the minutes of the previous meeting within 72 hours of adoption.

Senator Hinojosa is also working with District leadership to re-district the boundaries and allow for single member districts. This will ensure better representation from all cities within the District.

Senator Hinojosa released the following statement:

"I appreciate Agua SUD's leadership working with me to develop this legislation to further increase transparency and accountability of this important utility district. The updated operating procedures, standards of conduct, budget transparency, and ethics guidelines recommended in this bill are important to ensure a strong governance structure with the highest level of integrity and accountability. I applaud Board President Zeke Ortiz and General Manager Eddie Saenz for their

willingness to implement many of these recommendations into their procedures before this bill becomes law."

Esequiel "Zeke" Ortiz, Jr., Agua SUD Board President releases the following statement:

"As board president of Agua SUD, we want to reassure the community that we are working together in close partnership with Senator Hinojosa on this legislation as another example of the Agua Board's commitment to transparency in our governance of this utility district and fully support Senator Hinojosa in the proposed re-districting of the Board seats to provide a more equitable representation of all rate payers."

Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa proudly represents the counties of Nueces, Jim Wells, Brooks, and Hidalgo (part). Senator Hinojosa currently serves as Vice-Chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance, and serves on the Senate Committees on Property Tax; Natural Resources & Economic Development; Transportation; Agriculture; and Select Committee on Texas Ports.

#